

EXPOSITORY ESSAY: **Signs And Wonders** - in the Book of Acts by David M. Coddington

In the Book of Acts, Luke records the foundation and growth of the church. Luke wrote about many signs and wonders that happened during this time period.

Signs and Wonders in Acts:

Acts 2:4-6	Acts 9:40
Acts 2:43	Acts 10:46
Acts 3:1-10	Acts 12:6-7
Acts 5:1-11	Acts 12:23
Acts 5:12	Acts 13:11
Acts 5:15	Acts 14:10
Acts 5:19	Acts 16:18
Acts 6:18	Acts 16:26
Acts 8:6-7	Acts 19:6
Acts 9:8	Acts 19:11-12
Acts 9:18	Acts 20:9-12
Acts 9:32-25	Acts 21:9-11
	Acts 28:2-6

Definition

Signs and wonders, in the Book of Acts, were supernatural events that were an outpouring of Jesus' power through and for the apostles. There are 17 instances recorded where the apostles performed signs and wonders. These can be put into three categories: healing, exorcism, and judgment. When the apostles performed miracles, they made it very clear that the power of Jesus was responsible. When the High Priest asked Peter by what power or name he had healed a lame beggar, Peter responded, "then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed" - Acts 4:10.

God also performed signs and wonders for the apostles. He rescued the apostles, Peter, and Paul from jail on separate occasions. For the apostles and Peter, He used an angel, but God used an earthquake to free Paul and Silas.

A key element of these signs and wonders is that they were only performed by the apostles and four others: Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, and Ananias. At no point does Luke report that those who believed in Jesus all performed signs and wonders. It appears that this supernatural empowerment was given only to a select few persons.

Purpose

The purpose of the signs and wonders in Acts was to validate the ministry of the Apostles to those they preached the Gospel to. This is in parallel to the miracles performed by Jesus. Peter said in Acts 2:22, "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know." Jesus performed signs and wonders to affirm that He was indeed the Son of God and the Messiah. In the same

way, God attested the message of the Apostles to their audiences through the signs and wonders He did through them, as declared in Acts 14:3 "So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders." This is supported by the fact that nine of the miracles were followed by belief and mass conversion of those who saw what happened.

Progression

The signs and wonders in Acts seem to decrease in frequency. In the beginning of Acts, specifically chapters one through nine, signs and wonders are on a large scale and happen very close together. The apostles, Peter, Stephen, and Philip are constantly performing miracles. The next nineteen chapters, which cover approximately 20 years, have about 8 miracles recorded.

Conclusions

From these observations, two conclusions can properly be drawn. First, signs and wonders were not performed by every believer in Acts and are therefore not to be expected now. Every believer should not be expected to be able to walk around and heal people by just proclaiming it on the spot. That power was reserved to a few specific people in a certain time period. Second, it is possible that signs and wonders may have been more common in places where the Gospel had not been taken yet because the purpose of miracles, in Acts, was to validate the Gospel where it had not been taken yet.

Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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